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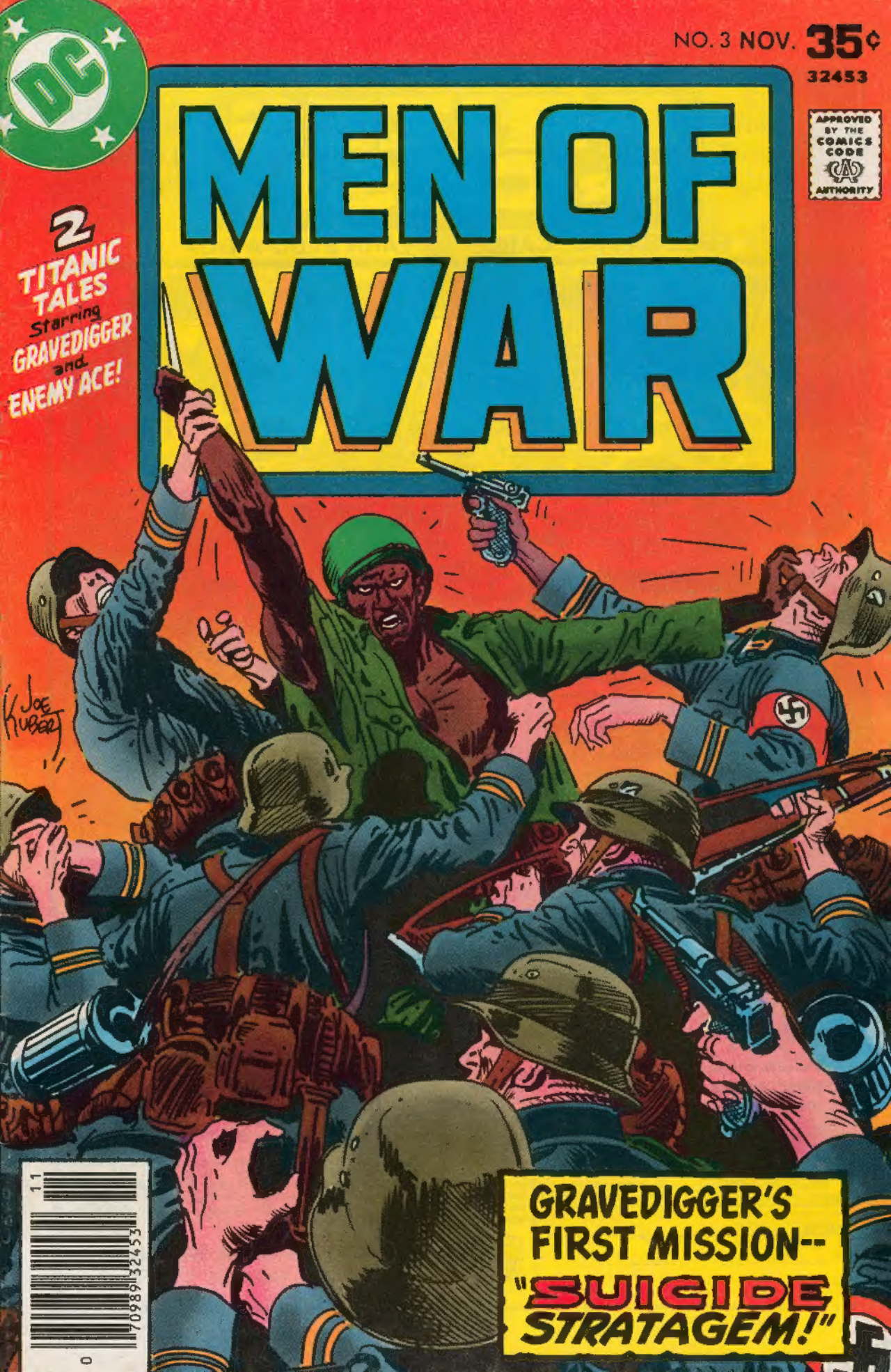
MEN OF WAR

2 TITANIC TALES Starring GRAVEDIGGER and ENEMY ACE!



GRAVEDIGGER'S FIRST MISSION--
"SUICIDE STRATAGEM!"

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U.S. ARMY
PERSONNEL FILE

STRICKEN WITH POLIO AS A CHILD, *ULYSSES HAZARD* HAD FOUGHT TO BUILD HIS FRAIL BODY INTO A *POWERHOUSE* OF STRENGTH AND STAMINA. BUT WHEN HE JOINED THE ARMY TO *PROVE* HIS ABILITIES, THE COLOR OF HIS *SKIN* KEPT HIM IN THE MENIAL RANKS OF *BURIAL DETAIL* -- UNTIL HE TOOK ON THE *PENTAGON ITSELF* TO EARN COMBAT CLEARANCE, COMMANDO STATUS... AND THE DREADED CODE-NAME: *Gravedigger*

THE SEASON -- SUMMER, 1942. THE SETTING -- A MINOR FRENCH VILLAGE JUST SOUTH OF THE LOIRE VALLEY. THE SITUATION --

DAVID MICHELINIE - WRITER
ARVELL JONES \ ARTISTS
ROMEO TANGHAL \
MILT SNAPINN - LETTERER
JERRY SERPE - COLORIST

-- SEE FOR YOURSELF!

HOLY GEEZ, HAZARD! I-I THOUGHT THIS TOWN WAS SUPPOSED TO BE *SECURED!*

WISE UP, BOGAN! YOU OUGHTA KNOW THE ONLY "*SECURITY*" IN THIS WAR'S A TRIP *HOME* --

-- IN A *PINE BOX!*

THE SUICIDE STRATEGEM

1

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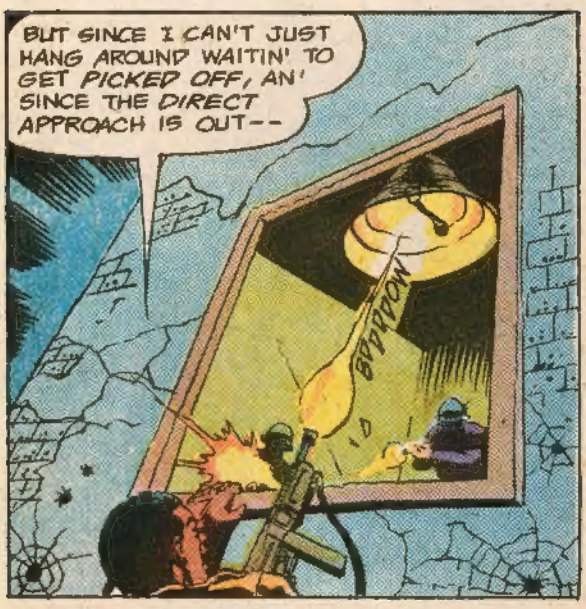
AND THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT YOU'LL GET, GRAVEDIGGER, UNLESS YOU--
BBDDRRRPP
BOOM
PAHING
--GET UNDER COVER, YOU CLOWNS! THIS AIN'T NO SUNDAY PICNIC, Y'KNOW!
LIEUTENANT GAGE! WH-WHAT THE HELL'S GOIN' ON?
SNIPERS IS WHAT'S "GOIN' ON", CORPORAL! THREE OF 'EM, NEAR AS WE CAN TELL-- UP IN THAT BELL TOWER!
MUST'VE INFILTRATED DURIN' THE NIGHT, AN' THE ONLY WAY TO GET TO 'EM'S THE FRONT DOOR-- WHICH THEY'VE CONVENIENTLY BLOCKED WITH ENOUGH DEBRIS TO FILL THE ENGLISH CHANNEL!
SO UNLESS WE GET SOME AIR SUPPORT, WE'RE STUCK!
WELL, AIN'T THAT JUST HUNKY-DORY! LOOKS LIKE WE REALLY STEPPED IN IT THIS TIME, DON'T IT, HAZARD?
UH... HAZARD?
2

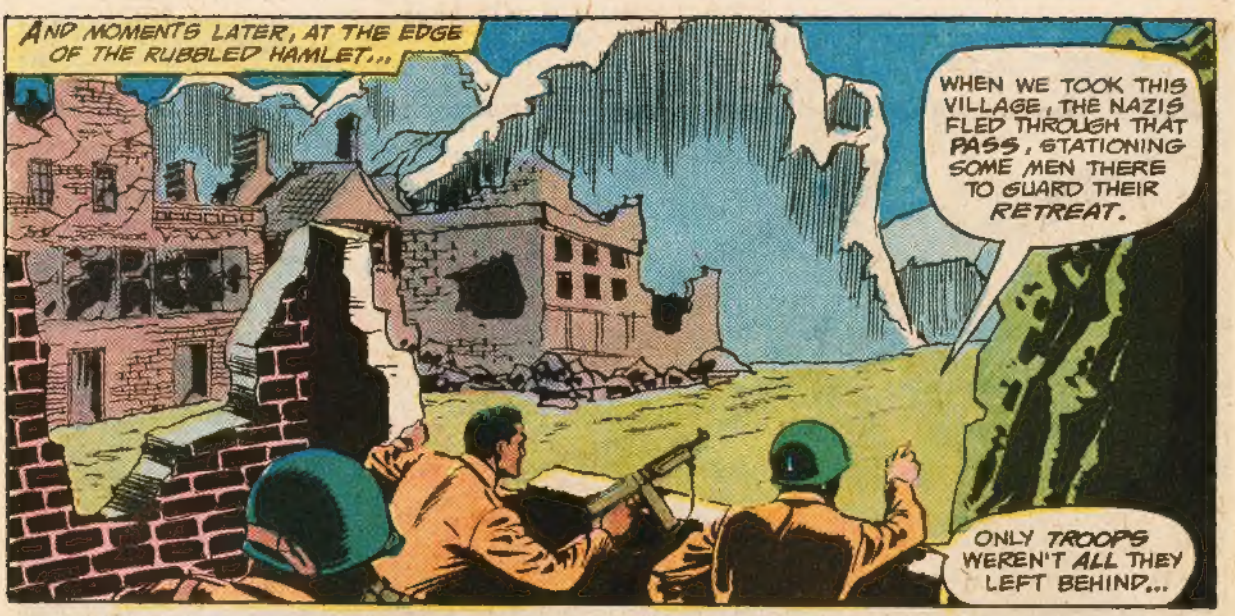
WHILE AT THAT MOMENT, ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DEADLY TOWER...
LOOKS LIKE I WAS RIGHT ABOUT THOSE NAZIS BEIN' SO SURE NO ONE COULD SCALE THIS SHEER WALL --
--THAT THEY'VE LEFT THEIR REAR UNGUARDED!
CAN'T SAY AS I BLAME 'EM MUCH, EITHER!
EVEN WITH ALL THAT TREE-CLIMBIN' I DID BACK IN THE STATES TO BUILD MY COORDINATION, THIS AIN'T EXACTLY A PIECE O' CAKE!
NOT ONLY DO I HAVE TO BE CAREFUL, BUT I GOTTA BE QUIET, TOO. 'CAUSE IF I MAKE JUST ONE LITTLE SLIP --
"--THINGS COULD GET KINDA MESSY..."
TAK
PZAK
KTOK
NOW, WITH A LITTLE BIT O' LUCK, I SHOULD--
BRRRRRRAPP
PEK
KCHINK
SWELL. I SHOULDA REMEMBERED LUCK AIN'T EXACTLY TREATIN' ME LIKE FAMILY THESE DAYS...
3



CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING.

FOR A MOMENT, THE MAN CALLED GRAVE-DIGGER STANDS SURVEYING THE CARNAGE HE'S JUST WROUGHT, TRYING TO CONVINCE HIMSELF THAT THE BLOOD-PUDDLING CORPSES AREN'T MEN, BUT MERELY "THE ENEMY"...

--YOU?! B-BUT, YOU SHOULD BE IN A STOCKADE! JUST WHAT THE BLUE BLAZES ARE YOU DOING HERE, SERGEANT--AND WITH A WEAPON?
I'M DOIN' MY JOB, LIEUTENANT! AND BY THE WAY--
--IT AIN'T SERGEANT NO MORE!
WHA--WHY THAT'S ABSURD! NO ONE GOES A.W.O.L. AS A SERGEANT*--AND COMES BACK AS A CAPTAIN!
*SHOWN IN MEN OF WAR #1!
ESPECIALLY ONE OF YOU PEOPLE!
CORPORAL, PLACE THIS MAN UNDER ARREST FOR IMPERSONATIN' AN OFFICER!
BACK OFF, LIEUTENANT, BEFORE I HAVE YOU ARRESTED FOR IMPERSONATIN' A HUMAN BEING. OR DON'T YOU RECOGNIZE THE SEAL ON THESE ORDERS?
TH-THEY'RE FROM..THE SECRETARY OF WAR?!
AND AFTER THE TERSE, EXPLANATORY INSTRUCTIONS HAVE BEEN READ...
THESE SEEM TO BE OFFICIAL, BUT..I DON'T UNDERSTAND--
YOU DON'T NEED TO UNDERSTAND, GAGE! I WAS SENT TO TAKE CARE OF A LITTLE PROBLEM YOUR UNIT CAN'T SEEM TO HANDLE ALONE--
--AND ALL YOU NEED TO DO IS FILL ME IN ON THE DETAILS! GOT IT?
WHY, UM, O-OF COURSE, R-RIGHT AWAY, UH...
...SIR.


AND MOMENTS LATER, AT THE EDGE OF THE RUBBLED HAMLET...
WHEN WE TOOK THIS VILLAGE, THE NAZIS FLED THROUGH THAT PASS, STATIONING SOME MEN THERE TO GUARD THEIR RETREAT.
ONLY TROOPS WEREN'T ALL THEY LEFT BEHIND...

"... THEY ALSO LEFT A PANZER IN A CAVE THAT'S SO WELL FORTIFIED, WE MIGHT AS WELL SPIT AT IT AS SHOOT!

"AN' EVERYTIME WE SEND IN AN AIR STRIKE, THEY JUST ROLL THE LOUSY TANK BACK INTO THE CAVE--
"--AND OUT OF RANGE..."

SO FAR, THEY'VE TAKEN EVERYTHING WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO DISH OUT! BUT I'M SURE A BIG-TIME COMMANDO LIKE YOU WON'T HAVE ANY TROUBLE--
--EH, CAPTAIN...?

OH, I'LL HAVE TROUBLE. I MIGHT EVEN END UP UNDER SIX FEET O' DIRT! BUT THAT'S THE ONLY THING THAT'LL STOP ME!
'CAUSE Y'SEE, THIS IS MY FIRST CHANCE TO SHOW WHAT I CAN REALLY DO! AND IF I BLOW IT NOW--

--I MIGHT AS WELL JUST CRAWL OFF AN' PUT A BULLET THROUGH MY OWN HEAD!

INTERLUDE: ONE WEEK EARLIER, AS A BRITISH SUPPLY GLIDER CLEAVES THE AIR ABOVE THE HEAT-CHOKED JUNGLES OF BURMA...
TAKATAKATAKA
ZERO ON OUR TAIL, MAJOR BIRCH! WE'RE IN A BLOODY BAD FIX NOW!
JUST STICK TO YOUR CONTROLS, LEFTENANT! THE CARGO WE'RE CARRYIN'S MUCH TOO IMPORTANT--
KRASH
--TO LET SOME BLEEDIN' ZEKE HAVE IT!
BRADADOW
CHABROOM
FANTASTIC, MAJOR! YOU GOT 'IM! THE BLOKES BACK AT THE OFFICER'S CLUB'LL FLIP WHEN THEY--
EASE OFF, MATE--
--I'M AFRAID THE MAJOR AIN'T HEARIN' YA NO MORE...
BUT WHAT HAS THIS TRAGIC SCENE TO DO WITH CAPTAIN ULYSSES HAZARD? ONLY TIME WILL TELL! FOR NOW---
(CONTINUED ON PAGE FOLLOWING)

--WE RETURN TO FRANCE... WHERE NIGHT FINDS A DRY-MOUTHED G.I. CLINGING TO THE SHADOWS OF A ROCKY SLOPE...

AIN'T NO WAY I'M GETTIN' PAST THOSE GUARDS WITHOUT BEIN' SPOTTED. EXCEPT MAYBE-- IF I GIVE 'EM SOMETHIN' ELSE TO LOOK AT!

MOMENTS LATER...

CAREFUL WITH THOSE APPLES, KURT. FRESH FRUIT IS RARE THESE DAYS.

ACH, YOU FORGET I WAS WITH THE BERLIN CIRCUS BEFORE THE WAR. AND AS YOU CAN SEE, I AM STILL GOOD!

YES, KURT, YOU ARE GOOD AT JUGGLING APPLES...

...BUT HOW GOOD ARE YOU AT JUGGLING --

--A...A GRENADE?!

KABLOOM!

APPARENTLY, NOT GOOD ENOUGH...

WHILE A SHORT DISTANCE AWAY...
THAT SHOULD KEEP THE NAZIS BUSY AT THE RIGHT OF THE CAVE LONG ENOUGH FOR ME TO MAKE MY ENTRANCE--
--STAGE LEFT!
MADE IT! NOW TO GET CLOSE ENOUGH TO THAT PANZER TO--
WHA--FUEL DRUMS! THEN THIS CAVE AIN'T JUST SOME RUN-O'-THE-MILL REFUGE--IT'S A HIDDEN FUEL DEPOT!
WHICH MEANS I'D BETTER PLAY THINGS REAL CAREFUL, OR--
KRAK
KP
SHOTS! COMIN' FROM BEHIND! BUT WHO--
10
CONTINUED ON PAGE FOLLOWING!

GAGE ?!
SPREAD OUT, MEN! SHOOT ANYTHING THAT MOVES!
KBLAM
BLAM
B-BUT, LIEUTENANT, SHOULDN'T WE PICK OUR TARGETS? I MEAN, WHAT IF THE CAPTAIN ACTUALLY MADE IT IN ALIVE--?
SO WHAT? HE'S ALREADY SERVED HIS PURPOSE, HASN'T HE?
SOMEONE HAD TO DISTRACT THE KRAUTS LONG ENOUGH FOR US TO REACH THE BACK ENTRANCE THOSE VILLAGERS TOLD US ABOUT! AND I'D SAY THAT HOT-SHOT SAMBO DID FINE! YESSIR--
BDAM
BLAM!
--REAL FINE! HEH HEH...
DAMN YOUR REDNECK EYES, GAGE! YOU WERE JUST USIN' ME!
BUT THE LAST LAUGH'S ON YOU! 'CAUSE IF YOU AIN'T STOPPED 'FORE A STRAY BULLET HITS THESE FUEL DRUMS--
TAKATAKATA
--WE'RE ALL GONNA BE BLOWN STRAIGHT TO HELL!
WILL GRAVEDIGGER'S FIRST MISSION ALSO BE HIS LAST? FIND OUT NEXT ISSUE--AS CAPTAIN HAZARD IS CAUGHT BETWEEN FRIEND AND FOE IN A DEADLY...
"TRIAL BY FIRE"

ENEMY ACE

THE HAMMER OF HELL!

TWICE BEFORE, VON HAMMER, THE ENEMY ACE, HAS SENT THE COAL-BLACK BRISTOL TO FLAMING DOOM! NOW, AS GERMANY'S ACE OF ACES RETURNS TO HIS JAGDSTAFFEL, AFTER A STAY IN THE HOSPITAL, THE GRISLY ENGLISH PILOT RISES FROM THE ASHES A THIRD TIME ..

SCHULTZE--OFF THE ROAD--AND INTO THE WOODS! MACH SCHNELL!

GROSS GOTT!--YOU ARE HIT!

"THE THREE FACES OF DEATH"

CONCLUSION

TOCK-TOCK TOCK-TOCK

HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-

J-4513

HANG ON! I WILL GET YOU TO COVER--AWAY FROM THAT STRAFER!

HYP-YP HYP-YP

BW BEEE-OOW

AFTER WRENCHING THE MOTORCYCLE INTO THE DENSE FOREST...

WHO WILL TAKE... CARE OF YOU... AFTER I .. AM GONE.. HERR... RITTMEISTER...?

NO--NO! YOU MUST NOT DIE! THAT WILD BOAR WAS HUNTING ME! SCHULTZE?... SCHULTZE...?

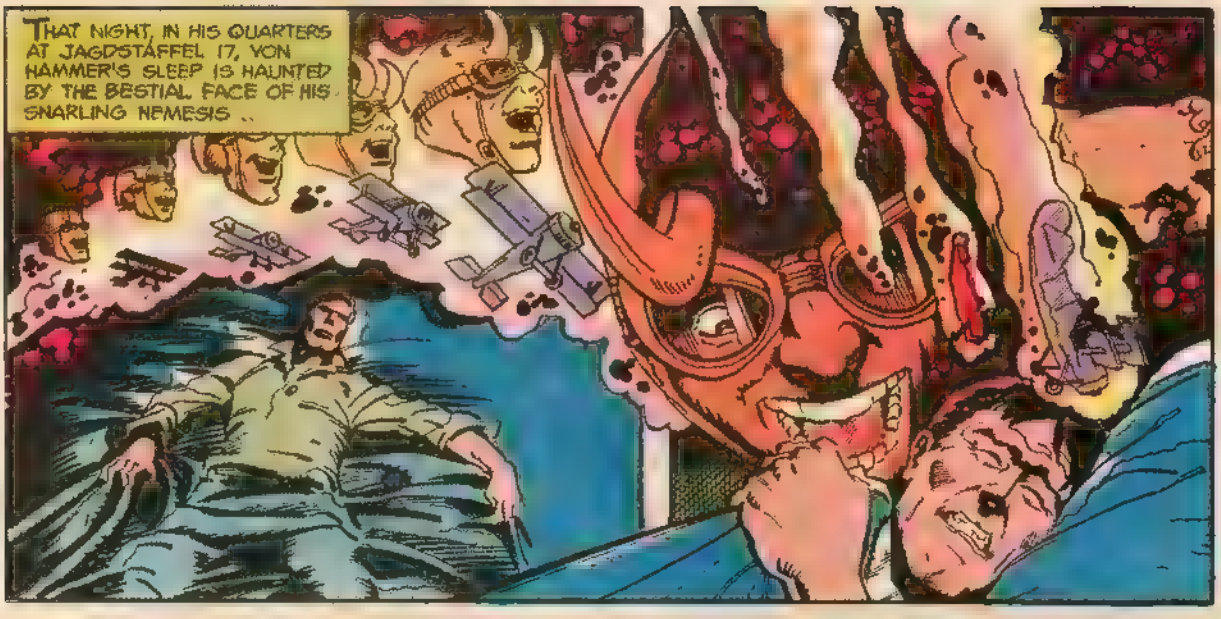
VON HAMMER MEETS THE GAZE OF THE LONE BLACK WOLF WHO HAD OFTEN BEEN HIS SILENT HUNTING COMPANION IN THE PAST ..

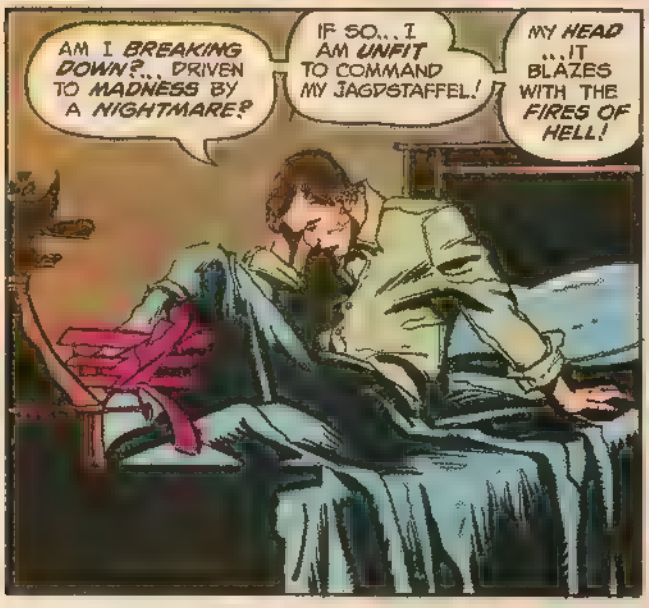
HE IS GONE...

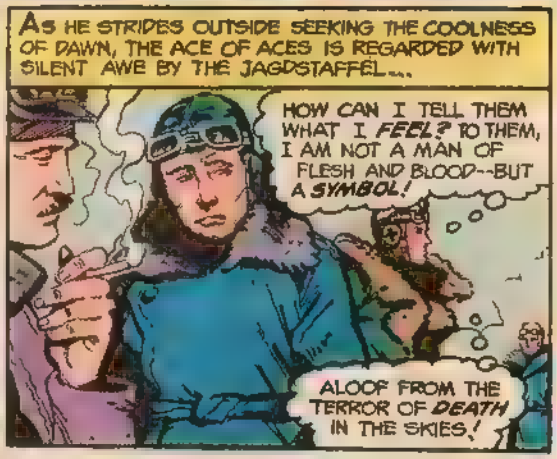
JA, I KNOW WHAT YOU ARE THINKING! WE TWO ARE ALIKE!

DESTINED TO WALK ALONE, FIGHT ALONE, AND DIE . ALONE

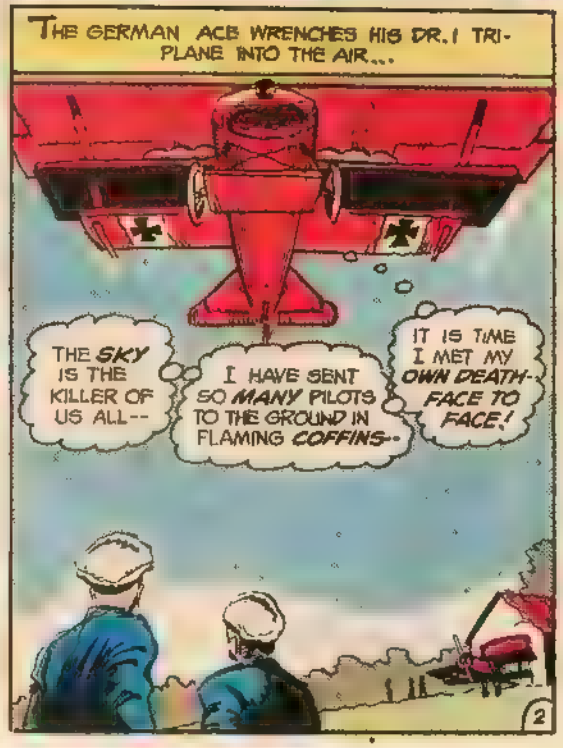
CREATED AND WRITTEN BY BOB KANIGHER
PENCILED BY ED DAVIS
INKED BY JUAN ORTIZ

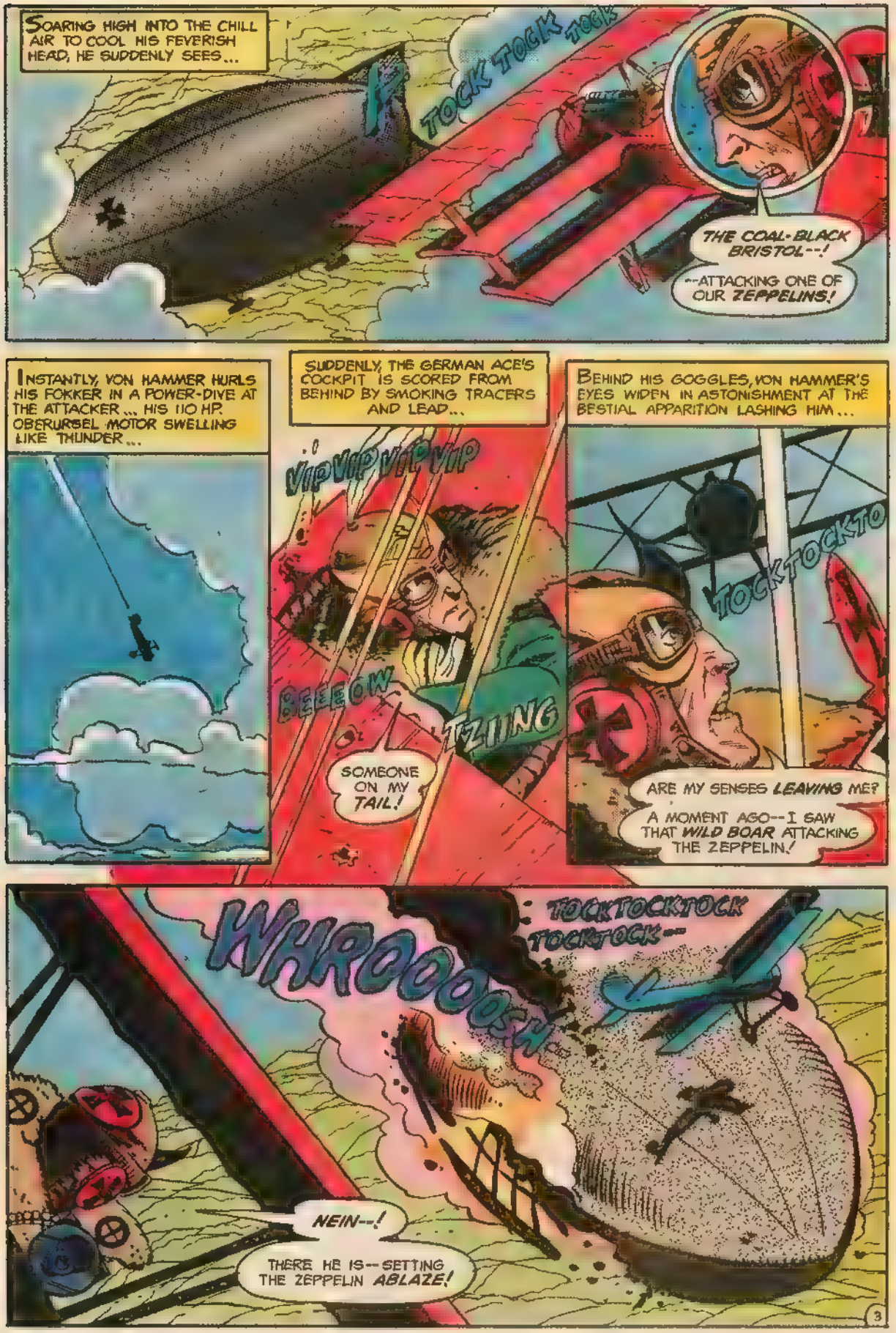

THAT NIGHT, IN HIS QUARTERS AT JAGDSTAFFEL 17, VON HAMMER'S SLEEP IS HAUNTED BY THE BESTIAL FACE OF HIS SNARLING NEMESIS ..


AM I BREAKING DOWN?.. DRIVEN TO MADNESS BY A NIGHTMARE?
IF SO... I AM UNFIT TO COMMAND MY JAGDSTAFFEL!
MY HEAD ...IT BLAZES WITH THE FIRES OF HELL!


AS HE STRIDES OUTSIDE SEEKING THE COOLNESS OF DAWN, THE ACE OF ACES IS REGARDED WITH SILENT AWE BY THE JAGDSTAFFEL...
HOW CAN I TELL THEM WHAT I FEEL? TO THEM, I AM NOT A MAN OF FLESH AND BLOOD--BUT A SYMBOL!
ALOOF FROM THE TERROR OF DEATH IN THE SKIES!

MY PLANE AND I... TO THEM, WE ARE ONE MACHINE... A KILLING MACHINE!


THE GERMAN ACE WRENCHES HIS DR.1 TRI-PLANE INTO THE AIR...
THE SKY IS THE KILLER OF US ALL--
I HAVE SENT SO MANY PILOTS TO THE GROUND IN FLAMING COFFINS--
IT IS TIME I MET MY OWN DEATH--FACE TO FACE!
2


SOARING HIGH INTO THE CHILL AIR TO COOL HIS FEVERISH HEAD, HE SUDDENLY SEES...
TOCK TOCK TOCK
THE COAL-BLACK BRISTOL--!
--ATTACKING ONE OF OUR ZEPPELINS!
INSTANTLY, VON HAMMER HURLS HIS FOKKER IN A POWER-DIVE AT THE ATTACKER... HIS 110 HP. OBERURSEL MOTOR SWELLING LIKE THUNDER...
SUDDENLY, THE GERMAN ACE'S COCKPIT IS SCORED FROM BEHIND BY SMOKING TRACERS AND LEAD...
VIP VIP VIP VIP VIP
BEEEOW
TZING
SOMEONE ON MY TAIL!
BEHIND HIS GOGGLES, VON HAMMER'S EYES WIDEN IN ASTONISHMENT AT THE BESTIAL APPARITION LASHING HIM...
TOCKTOCKTO
ARE MY SENSES LEAVING ME?
A MOMENT AGO--I SAW THAT WILD BOAR ATTACKING THE ZEPPELIN!
WHROOOSH
TOCKTOCKTOCK
TOCKTOCK--
NEIN--!
THERE HE IS--SETTING THE ZEPPELIN ABLAZE!

QUICKLY, VON HAMMER HURLS HIS SCREAMING FOKKER IN A LINKED BLUR OF WINGOVERS TO ESCAPE THE BLISTERING LEAD...
WHUUUUUM--
I AM OUT OF HIS SIGHTS!
BUT TO THE GERMAN ACE'S ASTONISHMENT...
AM... AM I-- MAD?
HE FINDS HIMSELF PURSUED BY THREE SNARLING FACES OF DEATH!
TOK TOK TOK TOK TOK TOK TOK
HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-
INSTANTLY, VON HAMMER POWER-DIVES AT THE STRICKEN ZEPPELIN...
WHREEEEEEEEE
LIKE A THUNDERBOLT, HE SLICES INTO THE FIERY SKELETON OF THE DOOMED AIRSHIP...
WHREEEEEEEEE
4
CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

AS THE TRIO OF COAL-BLACK BRISTOLS DIVE AFTER THEIR QUARRY...
...VON HAMMER ZOOMS OUT OF THE SMOKE AND FLAMES OF THE EXPLODING ZEPPELIN...
K-RAAAAM
THE FOKKER BUCKS AND THREATENS TO STALL AS IT REACHES ITS CEILING... THE GERMAN ACE FLIPS IT OVER...
...AND HURTLES DOWN AGAIN LIKE A FLAMING COMET...
THEY THINK I HAVE BEEN *CONSUMED* IN THE FLAMES OF THE *ZEPPELIN!*
BUT *I* AM IN THE *KILL* POSITION *NOW!*
TOKTOK
TOKTOK
TOKTOK
5

WHIPPING PAST THE STRICKEN BRISTOL, VON HAMMER HURTLES AT THE SECOND WITH HAMMERING SPANDAUS...

TOKTOKTOKTOK TOKTOKTOK...

WHRAAM...

LIKE LIGHTNING, THE CRIMSON FOKKER FLASHES AT THE LAST BRISTOL, AND DELIVERS THE FINAL DEATH BLOW...

TOKTOKTOK TOKTOK...

HE FOLLOWS THE SMOKING SHIP TO THE GROUND...

A *SUPERB* PILOT! HE MANAGED TO LAND HIS PLANE--BUT HE IS *TRAPPED* IN THE *COCKPIT!*

I *CANNOT* LET THE FLAMES *CONSUME* HIM!

A HASTY LANDING... AND VON HAMMER RACES RECKLESSLY TOWARDS THE PILOT TRAPPED IN THE FLAMING WRECKAGE...

OUR SCHEME TO DRIVE YOU TO MADNESS *FAILED!* IT WAS ALL FOR *NOTHING!*

ALL THE *IDENTICAL* PILOTS AND PLANES ENDLESSLY TAKING THE PLACES OF THOSE YOU SHOT DOWN--FOR *NOTHING!*

BUT *I* STILL LIVE--TO *DESTROY* YOU--!

TOCKTOCKTOCKTOCK

BUT BEFORE THE BULLETS CAN REACH VON HAMMER, THE FLAMES REACH THE PLANE'S GAS TANK, AND...

WHRAAAMM!

TO THINK THEY PRESUMED TO USE *MADNESS* AS A WEAPON IN WAR...!

WAR *ITSELF* IS MADNESS!

The END

BATTLE LINES

L-771

c/o DC COMICS, INC.
75 ROCKEFELLER PLAZA
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10019

Dear Editor,

I hate war comics! I've been buying your comics for ten years and have never bought a war comic. Well, you say, so what. If you don't like them, then don't buy them.

But I intend to do just that . . . except for **MEN OF WAR**, because here is something I like. I don't know how I missed the adventures of **Enemy Ace** before, but you can be guaranteed that I won't miss his adventures now.

How about "Words of War" for a letters page title?

Gustavo Ricardo Baron
4953 Cromwell Avenue
Los Angeles, California

Our competition publishes a magazine they herald as the "war comic for people who hate war comics" so we can't use that appellation as our slogan, Gustavo, but would you be willing to consider us the war comic that breaks all the rules? We sincerely feel that that's the principal reason for our creative success (commercial success will be judged later, when we get the sales figures that indicate your verdict, readers).

As for *Enemy Ace*, it never occured to us that any readers would be first encountering him in our pages. The Hammer of Hell has been flying through *DC's* war mags for over twelve years now, and was recently the star of his own *DC SPECIAL* collection. But for those of you who are just starting your *Enemy Ace* archives, here's a complete checklist of mags featuring new stories of Hans Von Hammer:

***OUR ARMY AT WAR* #151, 153 and 155 (1965)**
***SHOWCASE* #57 and 58 (1965)**
***STAR SPANGLED WAR STORIES* #138-145, 147-150, 152, 181-183 and 200 (1968 through 1976)**

"Words of War" strikes us as being a bit too argumentative for our taste . . . but if the majority of readers prefer it to "Battle Lines" we'll happily switch.

. . . . . .

Dear Paul,

I just read **MEN OF WAR** #1 and I liked it very much. Ed Davis did a bang-up job on the cover, **Gravedigger** and **Enemy Ace**, although it was kind of strange to see someone drawing **Enemy Ace** besides Joe Kubert. Romeo Tanghal and Juan Ortiz did great jobs inking the two stories—they didn't overpower Davis' pencils, they just made them better.

David Michelinie is one of my favorite writers. In **Code Name: Gravedigger** he brought realism into the series by showing that black soldiers faced a double handicap in World War Two—from the enemies and from his so-called allies.

I was also glad that the **Enemy Ace** returned in a new story. I can tell Hans Von Hammer didn't love war with all its violence. "Death Is A Wild Beast" destroyed all the so-called glory of war. How about the origin of **Enemy Ace**?

Charles David Haskell
15 West 139 Street
New York, New York 10037

The origin of *Enemy Ace* . . . hmm . . . we never gave that much thought. Could be there's a tale in that somewhere, so we'll pass the suggestion on to Mr. Kanigher for his careful consideration.

As for your comments on the *Gravedigger* artwork, we hope you've been equally pleased with Arv Jones' work. Arv joined the team when Ed Davis found himself unable to keep up with our deadlines, and although he blushingly admits to somewhat less knowledge of the military than his predecessor, we think he brings his own special enthusiasm to the series. What say you, readers?

. . . . . .

This column is being written before we've received all the mail on our first effort, so we'll devote more space to your comments on #1 next time. Meanwhile, let's take advantage of the extra space and get a couple of questions out on the table:

First of all, do you like *MEN OF WAR* as a two-series magazine . . . or would you rather see either *Gravedigger* or *Enemy Ace* in book-length stories? Or both, on a rotating basis?

What other types of war heroes are you interested in reading about? We're contemplating a series of stories based on the adventures of a war correspondant, for example. Does that do anything for you?

Finally, how does *MEN OF WAR* rate on your list of *DC's* war mags? Would you rather we published more *SGT. ROCK* instead . . . or is there a special charm to this mag?

Please give these questions some thought, and drop us a line with your responses. We can't print them all, but rest assured they will all be read by—Paul Levitz, Editor.

FROM THE META-ZONE TO EARTH!
STEVE DITKO'S
FOURTH ISSUE ON SALE SEPTEMBER 1ST!
SHADE
THE CHANGING MAN!